

VZCZCXRO7140
RR RUEHDBU RUEHPW
DE RUEHBUL #0810/01 0920434
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 020434Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8079
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 000810

DEPARTMENT FOR SRAP, SCA/FO, SCA/A, EUR/RPM
STATE PASS TO AID FOR ASIA/SCAA
USFOR-A FOR POLAD

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: Chaghcharan: Security, Development and Governance Update

11. Summary. Ghor is relatively secure by Afghanistan standards. Security concerns arise from anti-government elements moving into Ghor from neighboring provinces Farah and Helmand, from drug smuggling (and the accompanying corruption), and from violent tribal conflicts. Ghor's new governor is saying all the right things, lobbying Kabul personally for increased funds, but so far coming up short on commitments. The small Afghan National Police (ANP) presence in Ghor is generally considered corrupt and of poor quality but may benefit from the appointment of its new police chief, who hails from Nuristan and may be less likely to be influenced by local tribal disputes. Though the Afghan National Army (ANA) is not currently in the province, the current plan is to deploy ANA forces to Ghor during the August 2009 elections and station them there permanently. Despite its limited and declining development budget, the Lithuanian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) is working with the Afghan government and other international donors and organizations to upgrade the provincial airport and develop an all-weather road from Herat to Kabul via Chaghcharan. End Summary.

Security

12. Ghor province is relatively secure by Afghanistan standards. With the exception of 200 soldiers temporarily sent to Ghor during voter registration and a small recruiting station, there has not been a significant ANA presence in the province for decades, if ever. Violence in the province is fueled by anti-government elements escaping ISAF actions in Farah and Helmand, drug smugglers, and inter- and intra-tribal disputes. Tribal disputes are often negotiated among local elders, but inevitably, some action (e.g. theft of livestock) revives the enmity. In Dolat Yar district there are preliminary reports of increased weapons purchases by the Baiboka and Sadar tribes (both Tajik) that signal a potential rise in inter-tribal violence as the weather improves. The current disagreements between them concern food distributions and the placement of a coalition-built district center. The perennial dispute between the Pahlawan and Chest-e tribes makes travel to Sharak and Tulak risky, since the local leader is a Chest-e trouble maker (Mullah Mustafa), while local police are generally from the Pahlawan tribe.

Development

13. Development priorities are infrastructure, education and rule of law. Governor Munib told the PRT that only ten percent of the 557 schools in the province have buildings; 80 percent of the population engages in agriculture and livestock with little GIROA support; there is no sustainable source of electricity; roads need paving; and agriculture suffered from drought. The Lithuanian military carries out quick impact projects (QIP) consisting of small necessities such as blankets, clothing, school supplies and tents for schools; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs manages development projects. While leading the PRT, Lithuania has built schools, training centers, and conducted training for prosecutors and judges. The PRT also is building a public park in Chaghcharan in

cooperation with the Mayor and the Department of Public Works, and establishing a computer training center with internet connections at the Department of Information and Culture. The financial resources Lithuania brings to Afghanistan are modest and due to domestic budget pressures it will reduce its development funding by almost 50 percent next year.

¶4. The Lithuanians seek to coordinate where they can with other international actors in the province, and to identify other funding sources. The PRT has good relations with all the NGOs working in Ghor: Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, ARD, Global Partners, Coordination of Humanitarian Aid (CHA), and Afghan Aid. Working with World Vision, the PRT has completed fourteen school construction projects. Together with the UN Office of Drugs and Crime, it recently completed a series of training workshops for prosecutors and judges. The PRT has implemented projects funded by the Government of Japan (GOJ) contributing to the GOJ's decision to detail three GOJ development advisors to the Lithuanian PRT beginning in April 2009.

¶5. A key priority project underway is an upgrade of the provincial airport. GIROA secured funding from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for all upgrades except improvements of the runway to support military air, and Lithuania and the Ministry of Transportation signed a Memorandum of Understanding to this effect in early 2009. The Lithuanians are seeking the \$10 million donor support required for the runway construction, but SACEUR told the PRT during his recent visit that the runway is not yet included in the overall military plan for GIROA. A second priority development project for the PRT and local officials is an all-weather road from Herat to Kabul via Chaghcharan. South Korea and Japan are conducting a feasibility study; however, SACEUR commented that other studies

KABUL 00000810 002 OF 002

indicate such a road may cost as much as \$1 million per kilometer (it is 300 kilometers from Chaghcharan to Herat). The Lithuanians indicated they would start the project with a gravel road, with outside funding required for paving the road. (Comment: This project must be managed and lobbied at the national level given the scale of the project.)

Governance

¶6. Newly-installed Governor Munib has been saying all the right things. Appointed in November 2008, he returned in early March from Kabul where he lobbied GIROA for more funding for Ghor. He returned with many promises of increased funding, but no commitments. By contrast, recent Provincial Council (PC) elections saw the elevation of General Ahmand Rahimi (a suspected drug-smuggler and food-convoy looter with ties to local troublemakers Ammadullah Beg, General Morghabi, and Mullah Mustafa) to the post of PC President. Rahimi is implicated in the recent theft of 1,600 bags of food from a humanitarian convoy in Char Sadeh District. The former district administrator from Chard Sadeh was arrested in connection with the theft, and Rahimi has fled back to his home village in Char Sadeh presumably to escape a similar fate.

¶7. Ghor has only 700 police for an area the size of Belgium and a population of between 800,000 and 900,000. The quality of police in the province is very low. The U.S. military and EUPOL at the PRT provide police mentoring, but there is a need for an Afghan army presence in the province. The RC-West Commander, BG Serra, said the current plan is to deploy ANA forces to the province during the August 2009 elections and assign them there permanently. The police chief was recently replaced and it is hoped that his replacement, Abdul Baghy, who is from Nuristan and the nephew of Herat Governor Nuristani, will be less susceptible to local tribal pressures.

Comment

¶8. Ghor's challenge is to attract more attention to what is a relatively peaceful area under the responsibility of a PRT with a relatively low budget. However, if the Lithuanians can secure donors for the airport and the road project gains traction, Ghor

would see immediate and significant progress.

WOOD